



ST STEPHENS UNITING CHURCH
51 Neil Street, Toowoomba

3rd – 5th November 2023

Bottle Tree Remote Area Ministry

Please pray for...

- That doors will open to provide pastoral, spiritual and practical support where needed.
- For property owners who are struggling in the current drought, for sufficient rain, and for protection from fires.
- For further clarification of the role of Frontier Services in this region.

Report

The Bottle Tree Remote Area Ministry covers the Maranoa (including Surat, Arcadia Valley, Mitchell and Miles), extending to include part of Western Downs, and the Banana Shire (Wandoan and Taroom). It is jointly funded by Frontier Services (80%); Uniting Care Connect 100 (20%). The manse is provided by the Maranoa Congregations.

The ministry is multi-faceted - and involves bush chaplaincy, Uniting Care Chaplaincy, and congregational ministry.

1. Congregational Ministry – Bottle Tree RAM shares oversight (along with Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran) for the mainline congregations of the Maranoa (Roma, Injune, Wallumbilla, Arcadia Valley), and Wandoan/Taroom and Mitchell by leading church services, baptisms, funerals and being available for pastoral care and attending functions. Most church services are monthly, some are once per term. There is a good relationship that exists between the congregational pastors and ministers as reflected in RCCC - Roma Combined Christian Churches - with monthly get togethers, and combined bi annual church services, and shared activities.
2. As Connect 100 Chaplain, the ministry provides chaplaincy to approximately 17 Uniting Care staff – including Blue Care Staff in Roma, Surat and Mitchell and FADS Staff in Injune. One day each week is spent giving support and encouraging the staff in Roma and/or Injune through visits, phone calls, emails or one on one catch ups, as well as attendance at Blue Care functions.
3. Bush Chaplaincy with Frontier Services, aims to offer spiritual, pastoral, and practical support to people 'in the bush'. This year, I have focused on promoting and introducing to the community, the work of Frontier Services, creating connections with other local agency service providers

(TRACC; Lifeline; Headspace; members of Council etc.) and exploring possibilities of partnerships, opportunities for support, and discerning where there are needs in the community that are as yet unmet.

4. Bottle Tree RAM is full of variety and involves attending and supporting and helping at various community events (eg Red Cross fundraising, NAIDOC Flag Raising ceremony; Bull sales at Yarralumla etc); creating connections with members of the local community and council; farm sitting to give owners a break; visitations to property owners; leading baptisms, funeral services and internments; pastoral visits; preaching at ecumenical events; attending church run functions; applying for funding for future missional opportunities (eg for art trailer and for Darren Thrupp, OAM, Paralympian, to mentor local youth). It also requires driving distances on a weekly basis, and to date we have clocked up around 15,000+ kilometers (since February). From 27 August to 4th September, we drove to and attended the Birdsville Races along with the team from Sydney. This was a meaningful experience during which much was learnt about the history of Frontier services which I was honoured to share in a sermon in an ecumenical service in Roma upon my return.
5. Reports and Training. Monthly zoom sessions and reports for Uniting Care; Uniting Care Connect 100 conference was 7th and 8th August in Redcliffe; Quarterly reports to Frontier Services; Presbytery Ministers retreat in Alex Heads (September); Two day Govt funded Mental Health training workshop in Roma which was presented by the Royal Flying Doctors Service (October); Frontier Services Conference in Adelaide (October); Synod at Alex Heads (October); 2 weeks Holiday in July.

Recommendations

1. That this report be received.

Report Submitted by:

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If you have questions, please email before the meeting.